

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1306

June 24, 2008

The Honorable Karen Darch
Village President
200 South Hough Street
Barrington, Illinois 60010

Dear Mayor Darch:

Thank you for sharing your comments and recommendations regarding the proposed acquisition by Canadian National Railroad (CN) of the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railroad (EJ&E). I am opposed to this merger as currently proposed and will work with affected communities to make certain that their views are considered as a part of the Surface Transportation Board (STB) process.

I am seriously concerned about the potential hardships for communities associated with increased freight traffic, including traffic delays and the effect on emergency responders in communities who must pass through many at-grade crossings to reach people who need their help. Cities and towns along the EJ&E line must be assured that their commerce and their safety are not imperiled by slow-moving trains that could be as much as two miles in length.

In addition, the negative effect on important public transportation projects, such as Metra's New Start project STAR Line, as well as existing Amtrak service, is cause for additional concern. The increased freight traffic could increase costs, decrease on-time service, create construction delays, or postpone indefinitely the completion of important public transportation improvements that the Chicago metropolitan region desperately needs.

Finally, the costs associated with any infrastructure improvements required by this increased freight traffic should be largely borne by CN, and any merger should reflect a solid commitment by the new owners to pay for these improvements.

Please feel free to share this letter with other members of the The Regional Answer to CN Executive Committee and the Barrington Coalition Against CN Rail Congestion. I appreciate your input on this important topic and assure you that I and my staff will be closely monitoring developments on this merger in the months to come.

Sincerely,



Barack Obama
United States Senator

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